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"MAKING THE BEST USE OF 4-H CLUB OPPORTUNITIES"

NATIONAL 4-H CLUB RADIO BROADCAST

April 2, 1938

11:30 A. M. - 12:30 P. M. Central Standard Time

Washington, D. C.

(National Farm and Home Hour)

Negro Program - Wilcox County, Alabama

Reserve

C A S T

NARRATOR T. M. Campbell, Field Agent, Negro Work, Extension Service, United States Department of Agriculture.

MA BROWN Annie Mae Brown, Senior High, County Training School

CLARA RUTH Edna Bonner, Senior High, Camden Academy

MARY Martha Lumas, Eleventh Grade, Arlington School

FARM AGENT W. E. Street, County Agent, Wilcox County, Alabama

PA BROWN Bradley Jenkins, Senior High, Snow Hill Institute

HOME AGENT Miss P. A. Graves, Home Demonstration Agent, Wilcox

MUSIC Plantation melodies by Snow Hill Institute Chorus.

NARRATOR:

In Southwest Alabama, approximately 60 miles (as the crow flies) from Montgomery, the State's Capitol, is located Wilcox County, split in twain by the deep and muddy Alabama River. With all of its attendant assets and liabilities typical of that section, Wilcox County has an area of 896 square miles, and its once alluvial black soil is becoming noticeably gray as the annual cotton crop of 16 thousand bales takes its toll of fertility. Here we find rolling plains used for cattle raising, and vast tracts of virgin forest. In spite of abuses, Wilcox County is rich in natural resources, and richer still in human resources. It has a rural population of 24,500 people, 17,000 of them Negroes. The great majority of these 17,000 people are share croppers, as is a great majority of all the southern rural population. "Share cropper" - the Nation's headache. Tired, worn and burdened with toil, he returns from the cotton fields at close of day, singing.

MUSIC:

"Nobody Knows De Trouble I See"

Chorus: Oh, nobody knows de trouble I see
Nobody knows lack Jesus
Nobody knows de trouble I see
Glory Hallalula -

(over)

Verse Sometimes I'm up sometimes I'm down
 Oh, yes Lord
 Sometimes I'm almost on de ground
 Oh, yes Lord

 Altho you see me going long so
 Oh, yes Lord
 I have my trouble here below
 Oh, yes Lord.

 Ef you get there before I do
 Oh, yes Lord
 Lock out for me I'm comin' too
 Oh, yes Lord.

NARRATOR:

The story of the share cropper's struggle for economic survival has been related over and over again. But what of the share cropper as a person, a human being, an individual with hopes and longings? What of his wife and their children? The spiritual life of the share cropper is rich and vari-colored. His church and his preacher serve as an escape from stern reality, and therefore are a source of deep comfort and solace. Hence, the share cropper is not a "forgotten man" on that score at least, but to meet the demand of his children who want more education than Wilcox County has to offer is ever a problem. It is far more simple and easy to settle into the dreary round of existence with ones fellows, than to fight the hard and perilous battle of divergence from the ordinary mode of living. Clara Ruth Brown is a Negro girl in Wilcox County, second child in a family of ten, whose yearning for an education is exceeded only by her dogged determination to get it in spite of many handicaps. Already she has passed through eight grades of elementary learning in a school house six miles away. Twelve miles a day for six months of the year, she has trod back and forth in her all consuming desire to learn. But that was not enough, so while bending over a tub, helping with the weekly wash, Clara Ruth tells her Mother of her future plans to go away and get an education. To a Mother who will tell you with a sort of pride that it has been twenty years since she's been to Camden, the County Seat eighteen miles away; the idea of Clara Ruth going away to school could only be surpassed by the wish to make a round trip to the moon. Let's listen to what Ma Brown is saying to her daughter Clara Ruth.

SOUND:

CLOTHES BEING WASHED.

MA BROWN:

But you ain't never see'd nobody whuts been to dat school, Cla' Ruth, whut you hankerin' so fur to go dere. And, ah specks hit'll take mo' money den we sees in five years fur you ter stay dah six months. Chile, yo' Pappy's eyes wud pop out 'is head, for sho, ef you tole him eny sech crazy thing as dat. Go to Tuskegee - Lawd have mercy.

CLARA RUTH:

(In an impatient voice) Well, folks do go off ter school. How come ah can't? Just cause no girl from Turkey Creek ever did, is the reason ah'm goin'. Why, Ma, you talk lack Tuskegee was some where on the other side of the world. It's right here in Alabama, bout a hundred miles away.

MA BROWN:

Um, um, ah knows. Twas a man thru heah once frum over deah, long tall man, wid big feet. Sed farmers got a right ter live lak odder folks, en have a bath tub. Umph, but Lawd, chile, dat man ain't nevah bin no share cropper. He don' know. And dey tell me dat de sto' keeper up to the cross roads, say cotton gwine down to five cents agin.

CLARA RUTH:

(Exasperation in her voice) Yes, cotton. If 'twas fifty cents a pound 'twould be all the same wid us. Cotton. Ain't it nothin' in the whole world sides a cotton patch? Ah don' ker if it gits so cheap you can't give it away, ah'm goin' away from heah to school. Cotton -- Ma, lissen to me. Ain't nuthin' little as a cotton stalk goin to keep me down heah behind the sun. Umph, an ef ah took a mind to, ah cud pull up a whole patch o' cotton by myself. Folks goin' round plowin' it up - I wish they'd plow it all up anyhow. Cotton -- it ain't no Saviour to me - and ah ain't gonna bow down an' wcrship it neither.

MA BROWN:

(Breathlessly) Cla' Ruth Brown! Pull up a cotton stalk. Gal, is you gwine crazy? Don' let me heah no mo' talk lack dat. You jes wait 'till me an' you' Pappy make some 'rangements 'fo you talk 'bout leavin' heah.

CLARA RUTH:

'rangements! Yes, ah guess maybe all colored folks have to make 'rangements before they can do anything.

MA BROWN:

(Sagely) Yes, and most white folks too. Money don' grow on trees fur nobody - white folks nor black folks neither.

CLARA RUTH:

Oh, well, I'll get there by and by.

MUSIC:

"Keep Inchin' Along"

Chorus: Keepa inchin' along, keepa inchin' along
Jesus is comin' by and by
Keepa inchin' along like a poor inch worm
Jesus is comin' by and by

Verse Twas inch by inch I sought the Lord
Jesus is comin' by and by
Twas inch by inch he saved my soul
Jesus is comin' by and by

Got on my breast plate, sword and shield
Jesus is comin' by and by
Going to march out boldly in the field
Jesus is comin' by and by.

(Repeat the Chorus)

NARRATOR:

Cotton did drop that year and Clara Ruth did not get to go to Tuskegee, nor did her father make a payment on his long wanted farm. Life went on in its monotonous fashion for the Browns, their many ambitions stifled for lack of money. Then there came into the section a woman who was to make a way for the Clara Ruth's of Wilcox County. The first Negro home demonstration agent was appointed to the county in March 1928. She had been preceded a few years by a farm agent. Extension Service in Wilcox County was still in its infancy. 4-H was a new incomprehensible combination, odd to the ears of all who heard it. The regular monthly meeting of "Galilee Baptist Church" is now in session.

MUSIC:

"When De Saints Go Marchin' Home"

Chorus: When de saints go marchin' home,
When de saints go marchin' home,
Lord I want to be in that number
When de saints go marchin' home.

I had a sainted Mother who is gone on before
I promised her I'd meet her
When de saints go marchin' home.

When I was a sinner, didn't have no home
I promised my Maker, I'd meet him,
When de saints go marchin' home

When they crown him Lord of All
When they crown him Lord of All
Lord I want to be in that number
When de saints go marchin' home.

NARRATOR:

A man and woman seated in the rear of the church are the objects of all curious stares. Clara Ruth tries to learn from her sister Mary, who they are.

CLARA RUTH:

(Clara Ruth and Mary are whispering) Who are them two people? Look, Mary, there settin' behind old Man Jones.

MARY:

Sh-h-h Cla' Ruth, Ma is rollin' her eyes at you fit to kill.

CLARA RUTH:

Well, I want to know who they is. They look lack teachers. What they doin' heah?

MARY:

Ah don' know who dey is. Somebody sed dey wuz from Tuskegee.

CLARA RUTH:

(Loudly) Tuskegee!

MARY:

Shet up, Cla', you know deys boun to say sompin'. Ef you'll jest shet yo' mouf, mebbe you'll find out who dey is and whut dey gwine do.

CLARA RUTH:

My gracious, ole' Rev. Tompkins been hollerin' round a hour and a half. I wish he'd shet up and give the folks a chance. Why don' somebody shout? That's all he's rarin' for anyhow.

MARY:

He's callin' on Brudder Jones to pray now. Then it'll be time for the visitors to cum up front. Stop figitin' Cla' Ruth, deys interducin' de man now. Kinda slick lookin' ain't he?

FARM AGENT:

Reveren' Tompkins, members and friends of Galilee Baptist Church, I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to worship with you today. The young woman accompanying me is the newly appointed Home Demonstration Agent for Wilcox County. We have been hoping for months that the women and girls of our county would have some guidance in their efforts to improve themselves and their homes. Will you stand, Mrs. Hunter, and let "Turkey Creek" Community see you? (a patting of hands and stomping of feet in recognition of the agent.) It is not so much the work that girls and boys do on the farm that drives them to the city, but that there is nothing to look forward to except work. It is our duty as parents and workers to make rural home life happy so that our children will be content to stay here with us. By carrying out a live-at-home program, the results will not only be more money in your pockets, but more of those things that go to make life worthwhile; better health, better churches, more and better schools, more education, happier homes and peace and fellowship with all men.

MUSIC:

"When De Saints Go Marchin' Home" (Continued. Fades)

NARRATOR:

Clara Ruth led all the girls in Wilcox County in becoming acquainted with 4-H Club Work. The home demonstration agent found her quick, receptive, and a born leader. While the rest of Wilcox County caught on slowly, the "Turkey Creek" club thrived from the very first, largely due to Clara Ruth's enthusiasm. It did not take long for her to reveal the still brightly burning hope to go to Tuskegee. Nor did it take the Home Demonstration Agent long to work out money making plans for Clara Ruth's education. It will be seen however, that Farmer Brown, her father, is just a little skeptical.

PA BROWN:

But ah ain't go no money to buy aigs, Miss. Ah didn't even pay out dis year.

HOME AGENT:

Why, Mr. Brown, is Clara Ruth's desire for an education of no importance to you? A few settings of pure bred eggs does not cost a fortune.

PA BROWN:

"Yes, Miss. I know but Doc Smith, on the next place bought some o' dem "pure in heart" chickens and he says dey dies faster den dese here regular ole' hard ankle kind.

HOME AGENT:

"Why, of course, they'll die if they aren't cared for properly. You can't give a pure bred chicken scrub care. We shall be only too glad to explain everything you need to know about buying and setting the eggs, building the chicken house and the proper care and feeding of the flock. Now you do want to see Clara Ruth get an education, don't you Mr. Brown?

PA BROWN:

(In complete change of tone) Ya'sm. Her and de ole' 'oman thinks ah don' want de little gal to git away from "Turkey Creek" and be somebody. But I sho do, I was jes' hidin' mah nacheal feelin's Miss, cause ah didn't see no way out fur her. But ah'm willin' to do anything ya'll sez, ef it'll make de way clear for Cla' Ruth to go to school. Now what ya'll want me ter do?

HOME AGENT:

That's the spirit, Mr. Brown. Your landlord says that the small plot adjoining the garden can be planted in corn and other feeds. That will go a long way towards helping to feed the chickens. And every cent of profit made on this project is going to belong to Clara Ruth, isn't it? She is going to put it in the bank, and the whole family is just going to forget about it until the day arrives when she can leave for school. Is that a bargain?

PA BROWN:

Ya'sm, everything you sez goes.

MUSIC:

"Good News, Chariot's Comin'"

Chorus: Good news, de chariot's comin'
Good news, de chariot's comin'
Good news, de chariot's comin'
And I don' want her leave me behin'

Verse Dar's a long white robe in de hebben I know
A long white robe in de hebben I know
A long white robe in de hebben I know
And I don' want her leave-a me behind

Dar's a starry crown in de hebben I know
Dar's a starry crown in de hebben, I know
Dar's a starry crown in de hebben, I know
And I don' want her leave-a me behind.

Dar's silver slippers in de hebben, I know
Dar's silver slippers in de hebben, I know
Dar's silver slippers in de hebben, I know
And I don' wan her leave-a me behind.

Dar's a golden harp in de hebben, I know
Dar's a golden harp in de hebben, I know
Dar's a golden harp in de hebben, I know
And I don' want her leave-a me behind.

NARRATOR:

And Farmer Brown was as good as his word. Religiously following every suggestion of the Extension Agents, he was a man to be reckoned with at any mention that Clara Ruth's money be used for anything at all. "Play lak it ain't dah", he would say, and the matter was settled. Three years passed and the desire that would have burned low in another less courageous breast still flamed high in Clara Ruth. There were ups and downs to be sure, but her chicken project proved profitable. Clara Ruth takes from under the mattress, a flat tin can painted in bright colors. On the front side is pasted a small likeness of Booker T. Washington, on the other side is painted "4-H". On the inside is the magic egg money which she begins to count.

SOUND:

COINS BEING COUNTED.

CLARA RUTH:

Ma, please take this money to town and with this seven dollars, I'll have seventh-five in the bank. Just look at my beautiful white hens. When I leave for Tuskegee in the Fall, Brother Joe is going to take over my flock. By the time he finishes "Turkey Creek", he won't have to wait around to go to school. Four years I've waited and it makes me mad to think of that whole year I wasted before our 4-H Club was organized.

MA BROWN:

Sometimes I think when all you young'uns git grown an' off my hands, I'll start in to learn somethin' myself. Don' tell me you kain't learn a old dog new tricks. Me, fifty years old, and jes' learnin' how to use a sto' bought pattern. Been layin' my goods down on de flo' and whackin it out ever since I wuz knee high to a duck. (laughs) Ef dat don' beat all.

CLARA RUTH:

Ma, life is so much better for us now. We're really "making the best better", 4-H - head, heart, health and hands - and I've got another big H its meant to me - Hope. Let's all say the club pledge. I never get tired of it.

"I pledge -

My Head to clearer thinking
My Heart to greater loyalty
My Hands to larger service, and
My Health to better living
for

My Club, My Community, and My Country"

CLARA RUTH:

And for Clara Ruth Brown, believe me, this girl is going to Tuskegee. Let's sing a song before I start cryin'.

MA BROWN:

Cla' Ruth, you sound like somebody jes' gittin' 'ligion.

CLARA RUTH:

Well, Ma, that's just the way I feel.

MUSIC:

"Rise Shine De Lights A. Comin'"

Chorus: Oh Rise Shine De Light is a comin
Oh Rise Shine De Light is a comin
Oh Rise Shine De Light is a comin
My Lord says - says he's comin by and by

Verse I'll pitch my tent on dis camp ground
My Lord says he's comin by and by
An' give ole Satan another round
My Lord says he's comin by and by

Ole Satan's mad and I'm glad
My Lord says he's comin by and by
He missed the Soul he thought he had
My Lord says he's comin by and by.

I mean to shout and never stop
My Lord says he's comin by and by
Until I reach de mountain top
My Lord says he's comin' by and by.

NARRATOR:

You have just heard the story of the daughter of a Negro share cropper, Clara Ruth Brown, who wanted an education and got it. Through the supervision of her county farm and home demonstration agents she successfully managed a chicken project, making it possible for her to enter Tuskegee Institute. Through the same industry, patience, and courage exhibited as a farm girl in Wilcox County, Alabama, she remained at Tuskegee until her graduation. Back in a rural community she has been an outstanding and useful citizen. Today, there are thousands of Clara Ruth's all over the Southland receiving the guidance and encouragement of Extension Workers to find a way or make one.

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Original sketch by Miss Patsy A. Graves, Home Demonstration Agent, Wilcox County, Alabama. Revised by the Alabama Extension Service Staff, Tuskegee Institute, January 15, 1938.

